

Father,

Thank you for Wednesday Nights. Thank you that we could gather together as the body and worship you. I pray for us as we look into your word. I pray your spirit would illuminate it for us and I pray we would be open to learn, and if we are operating from any unbiblical paradigms, I pray you would strip those away Father. Amen.

Well, thank you for being here tonight. We're really Glad your hear. Thank you to Daniel Ezell who graciously kicked our series on Acts off last week.

I want to start out with a question for you.

How important is the Holy Spirit in your understanding of the Gospel?

I'll ask that again.

How important is the Holy Spirit in your understanding of the Gospel?

Very important? A little important? Maybe you have no idea.

I hope tonight to press against your answer to this question 'how important is the Holy Spirit in your understanding of the Gospel tonight'?

Let's read the passage for tonight, Acts 2:1-13:

2 When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. ² And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³ And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the

Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

⁵ Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. ⁶ And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. ⁷ And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? ⁸ And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? ⁹ Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, ¹¹ both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God." ¹² And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" ¹³ But others mocking said, "They are filled with new wine."

So let's distill the high points of this story down here.

So believers are gathered together. Great wind and sound come. Fireballs hover over peoples heads. The believers are filled with the Holy Spirit and they are speaking in other languages.

Then the neighbors hear the commotion. And when they come to find out what's going on, people from different areas around the known world hear their languages being spoken and they are amazed.

And then you have people there who mock what's happening as if the believers are drunk.

So that's the gist of it.

But these short 13 verses tell us so much about God, his heart for us, and how he seeks to accomplish his purposes in the world and our lives.

As many of you know, I purchase a foreclosure in the Spring of last year, and have been working on it since then. There have been days working on the house, that I have looked at all that needed to get done, and felt that tsunami of that pressure. Early on in the project, I had to complete a task, and I needed a specific tool, but had trouble locating it.

And so rather than continue to look for it, I did what needed to be done. And let me tell you, it was hard work. I mean that kind of work where your pushing and pulling and sweat is dripping off of you like your in a shower, and it's dripping into your eyes...you get the picture...I'm fat.

Anyways, can you guess what happened the second I finished this job that took hours when it could have taken minutes?

Yup, that's right, I found that tool.

Isn't the same thing true for us in our Christian lives when it comes to the Spirit of God?

Don't so many of us live our lives in a way as if we don't have the right tool, and so we just go at it alone, trying harder and harder to do this thing called life.

Like how many of us treat Christianity like this:

We come to Jesus, repent of our sins, and God in his love and his power, saves us through the work of Christ.

But, we get this idea that then we have the power and the strength to sustain us.

Like God in his power saves us, but then we're just supposed to do this thing called life in our own power. That's how we live our Christian lives.

But if we don't have the power to save us, why do we think we have the power to sustain us?

I'll ask that question again:

If we don't have the power to save us, why do we think we have the power to sustain us?

David Plat puts it this way:

Could it be, that one of the greatest hindrances towards the advancement of the gospel today, is not pagan idolatry, or sinful sexuality immorality around the world, what if one of the greatest hindrances to the gospel today is the attempt of the church of God to do the work of God, apart from the power of the Spirit of God.

The day of Pentecost here in Acts chapter 2 is all about God showing us that it is through his power that he sustains us, it is through his power that he accomplishes his purposes in our lives, it is through his power, that he accomplishes his purposes in the world.

And yet for so many of us we forget that. We live as if this whole christian life thing is up to us. We like if we just try harder, and pull ourselves up by our bootstraps than the mission, and purpose and power of God will be displayed in our lives.

We live our lives as if it is on our shoulders to do this kingdom work thing.

We may pay lip service at times to the Spirit of God in our lives, but in that quiet secluded place in our hearts, if we're honest and transparent, we know there is something missing...and really there is someone missing...and that's the Holy Spirit.

Now I'm not saying the Spirit's not inside us. What I am saying is we often live our lives as if he's not there.

Francis Chan puts it this way:

Without the Holy Spirit, people operate in their own strength and only accomplish human-size results. The world is not moved by love or actions that are of human creation. And the church is not empowered to live differently from any other gathering of people without the Holy Spirit. But when believers live in the power of the Spirit, the evidence in their lives is supernatural. The church cannot help but be different, and the world cannot help but notice.

Pentecost, Acts 2, is all about God declaring that things are different now.

No longer does God's Spirit only rest on certain leaders for short periods of time.

No longer does God's Spirit come and go.

No longer does God's Spirit only rest on a few.

No. In Acts 2 God makes clear that if you repent and believe, God's Spirit rests on you. God's Spirit indwells you.

Jared Wilson puts it like this:

If you are a Christian— that is, if you are someone who has repented of your sins and placed your faith in

Jesus Christ alone for salvation— God's presence in your life is guaranteed. His love is always over you, his Son in heaven is always interceding for you, and his Spirit has taken up residence in your soul to give you the power required for every need you have.

When you repent and believe, God doesn't just clean things up through the Spirit. God doesn't just bring healing.

No, God literally makes you new.

God doesn't try and fix your old heart, he literally give you a new heart and you are a new creation. Not a fixed creation, a new creation.

God does this transformative work through the Spirit and his Spirit indwells you.

God's Spirit is literally inside us tonight, right here and now, and he is with us in a very real sense.

So when I say, GOD IS WITH YOU, I mean it.

God is with you in that situation at work, with that coworker who is slandering you, and you know God want's you to be above reproach.

God is with you in your marriage even though it's falling apart, and you are desperate, i mean desperate for change.

God is with you as you build relationships with your unbelieving neighbors and want to show them the love of Jesus by just being present in their lives.

God is with you as those people in your lives who were once friends turn their backs on you, and slander you.

God is with you as you face old age, and life's rhythms have changed and your struggling to find your place and your purpose.

God is with you.

God is with you.

Stop trying to do things on your own.

Stop trying to accomplish the purposes of God in your life in your own power.

Stop living as if God has called you to do this thing on your own.

He hasn't. He never did call you to do it on your own.

That's what Acts 2 is all about. That God is with you.

And all through the book of Acts we see story after story after story of people who get it, who understand that God is with them.

And so they do things, and say things, and are a part of things that are not of themselves.

They aren't content with human sized results.

They understand that God is with them, and they move with purpose, and confidence, and the world was forever changed.

In fact, we're here tonight because of them. Because of their boldness. Because of their belief, because they knew that God was with them.

Don't you want to be that.

Don't you want to live in the truth that its the power of God that saves you and its the power of God that sustains you?

I know I do.

I know for a lot of us we forget that, and we hunker down in our situations, and we fall back to our way of doing things, which is doing things in our own power.

And I really believe as I read this passage, and prepared, that the resounding message coming forth from the text is that literally "God is with you".

In the book of Ephesians, Paul actually prays a prayer for the Ephesian Christians, that they would know that God is with them. Ephesians 3:14-21, he prays this:

14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,
15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, **16** that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, **17** so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, **18** may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, **19** and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.
20 Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, **21** to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

How incredible is this prayer?

When I read this prayer, I see Paul praying, “God you do the work to strengthen these people through the Holy Spirit, God you do it.”

See, God strengthening us in our walk with Jesus doesn't come through anything you and I can do or produce, rather God strengthens us through his Spirit.

When I read this prayer, it helps me to realize that I bring nothing to the table. You bring nothing to the table. We bring nothing to the table.

And the sooner you I accept that fact, the closer we will become to allowing the power of the Spirit of God to move in and through us to do things and go places it just doesn't make sense we can do or go.

Now before the part of your brain starts kicking in and you ask yourself, “Did he just call us worthless?”

Listen to the words of Paul to the Corinthian Church,:

⁹ But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.¹

Did you hear that? When you are weak. When you realize you don't bring anything to the table. When you understand that you don't have what it takes...it is in that place that you are strong.

¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 2 Co 12:9–10.

And why are you strong, because of the Spirit of God residing in you, working in you, working through you, and it is His strength that strengthens you.

What I want you to get from the message tonight is that you don't have what it takes, but God does, and he is with you.

Maybe you're hear tonight and your struggling. Like you've got really heavy stuff that your dealing with, and I want you to know, GOD IS WITH YOU.

Maybe your here tonight, and your struggling because you don't feel like God is there, and your struggling with that feeling. I want you to know, , GOD IS WITH YOU.

And I am going to paraphrase Ephesians 3 a little here, but, God is able to do far more than you can ask or think. Allow Him to work in you. Repent of what you need to repent of. Ground yourself in love. Stop exchanging counterfeit power, for the power of the Spirit that literally dwells inside you. Move forward, and expect big things from God!

Let's pray.